

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 066708

21

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 066708

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ASEC, CGEN (MAKSIMOV, V. L.)

SUBJECT: WRAP-UP ON MAKSIMOV INCIDENT

REF: USUN 922 AND PREVIOUS

1. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF SOVIET EMBASSY'S SHIFTING POSITION ON MAKSIMOV AFFAIR AND OF US EFFORTS TO RESOLVE MATTER.

2. THE SOVIET EMBASSY'S INITIAL TOUGH LINE REGARDING MAKSIMOV'S MARCH 14 ACTIVITIES BEGAN TO CHANGE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 17, WHEN CHARGE VORONTSOV ASKED THAT HEARING SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 20 BE POSTPONED FOR WEEK. USUN MARCH 18 ARRANGED FOR POSTPONEMENT UNTIL MARCH 26.

3. ON MARCH 18 VORONTSOV TOLD US BEST SOLUTION WOULD BE DEPARTURE OF MAKSIMOV, WITH UNDERSTANDING DAMAGES WOULD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 066708

BE PAID FOR. ON MARCH 19, WE LEARNED THAT MAKSIMOV'S US

ATTORNEY HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED BY SOVIET EMBASSY TO PLEA BARGAIN. LATER THAT DAY VORONTSOV TOLD US THAT IT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO SOVIET SIDE IF MAKSIMOV WERE ALLOWED TO PLEAD GUILTY TO REDUCED CHARGES, PAY FINE AND DAMAGES,

WITHOUT A COURT APPEARANCE. USUN, WHICH HAD STAYED IN TOUCH WITH CONCERNED PARTIES IN NEW YORK, BEGAN CONSULTATIONS TO THIS END.

3. AT 7 PM MARCH 20 VORONTSOV CALLED DEPARTMENT TO ASK THAT MAKSIMOV CASE BE RESOLVED MARCH 21 SO THAT MAKSIMOV COULD RETURN TO USSR ON MARCH 23 AEROFLOT FLIGHT FROM NEW YORK. VORONTSOV UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS PROBABLY WOULD ENTAIL COURT APPEARANCE BY MAKSIMOV. VORONTSOV ACKNOWLEDGED IN PASSING THAT MAKSIMOV HAD BEHAVED "STRANGELY".

4. USUN MET WITH DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE MORNING OF MARCH 21 TO SEE IF CASE COULD BE RESOLVED THAT DAY. ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY, AND THEN JUDGE ASSIGNED TO CASE, AGREED.

5. MAKSIMOV DEPARTED WITHOUT INCIDENT MARCH 23. CASE RECEIVED UNFORTUNATE PUBLICITY MARCH 22 AND 23, DUE TO STORY IN NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, ATTRIBUTED TO #HIGH INTELLIGENCE SOURCES", THAT MAKSIMOV WAS "A TOP AGENT OF THE SOVIET KGB". DAILY NEWS ADDED THAT "FBI WILL KEEP TABS ON THE DEPARTURE".

6. AS FOOTNOTE, DEPARTMENT LEARNED MARCH 24 THAT ON NIGHT OF TAXI ESCAPE. MAKSIMOV HAD EARLIER ENGAGED IN FISTICUFFS IN BAR OF PLAZA HOTEL. POLICE WERE CALLED BUT CHARGES WERE NOT PRESSED AGAINST MAKSIMOV, WHO WAS PLACED IN TAXI BY NEW YORK POLICE OFFICER.

7. FOR MOSCOW: TO PROVIDE BASIS FOR FUTURE COOPERATION OF SOVIET AUTHORITIES, EMBASSY MAY WISH TO REPORT CONCLUSION OF MAKSIMOV CASE TO MFA, INCLUDING OUR RAPID

ACTION ONCE SOVIET EMBASSY CLARIFIED ITS POSITION.
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PAGE 03 STATE 066708

8. FOR USUN: DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES EFFORT USUN EXPENDED ON THIS CASE AND WISHES TO COMMEND MISSION FOR ITS TIMELY AND DEFT HANDLING OF DIFFICULT INCIDENT.
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